



"INFORMATION THAT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE"

USDA

African American Advisory Council

Multi-Session Management Input
USDA Managers and Supervisors
USDA Liaison of 1890s (HBCU)
USDA Human Resources, Recruitment and
Training Specialist
Raw Data Report
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Review Mission Vision – Prioritized Strategic Objectives

Participant Instructions

Review Mission/Vision Please Provide the major Objectives Derived from the Mission/Vision and the Measures, which are to be used to monitor progress (what does success look like?)

Mission:

To identify and address issues affecting African American employees and customers by ensuring opportunity, access, and equity in program delivery and services, education and research, and employment and career development. The AAAC works with USDA's Mission Areas and Agencies to coordinate and implement a number of the recommendations and initiatives in the AAAC strategic action plan. In addition, the AAAC, as an advisory body to the Secretary, provides recommendations as appropriate.

ARTICLE I PREAMBLE

"We, the Secretary's African American Advisory Council members, in the spirit of cooperation and support of the USDA Mission, will provide advice to the Secretary and give USDA management a focal point to assess, measure, and ensure progress in addressing African American's issues. The African American Advisory Council will help to assure that African American employees gain full participation in program delivery and services, employment and career development, and education and research."

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

"The African American Advisory Council will provide advice to the Secretary and give USDA management a focal point to assess, measure, and ensure progress in addressing African American's issues."

Objectives

1. Give the Secretary advice concerning AA issues.
2. To assure that African American employees gain employment
3. Identify program and systemic problems and solutions facing AA
4. The ability for employees to gain full participation in program delivery
5. Identify Efforts that build and value diversity of the USDA workforce.

Strategic Actions

1. Use AAAC & its Deliberations to Generate Recommendations

- Gather and analyze information (From HR and CR, Agency Human Capital Plans, etc.)
- Get assistance from IT, HR and CR to analyze data and information
- Seek assistance on conducting critical analysis of current workforce and projected needs of USDA as related to African Americans.
- The AAAC members becoming accountable for their own participation, the input from their respective mission areas, and informing other African Americans within their mission areas of the work of the AAAC. The need for AAAC members to open up the channels of communication within field entities of their mission areas. The acceptance of the customer service concept with the AAAC work. The measurement of this accomplishment is the amount of input received from the customers based on increased awareness of this work.
- Develop a meeting format at which substantive issues are put before the Council.
- Develop an annual action plan measurable action items. Plan should include specific items to be developed for forwarding to the Diversity Advisory Council for approval and submission to the Secretary.

2. Engage Field Offices

- The field operation is the largest portion of USDA and the networking of headquarters AAAC members with specific field individuals.

3. Use USDA/1890 Liaison Officers Recruitment and Research

- The AAAC visit the school and get them prepared for the work force. We help the bright students to get a job at USDA, also keep in touch with USDA/1890 liaison officers. Also put on our agenda to visit at least one 1890 school a year to do recruitment.
- The USDA/1890 Liaison Officers are on campuses at Land-Grant Inst's and are knowledgeable about potential employees (students) available to fill important USDA vacancies. They can help in guiding students in selecting majors needed in USDA.
- Engage the 1890 Liaison Officers to get them use to working with the AAAC as an important tool to get the best and brightest AA candidates/employees hired into USDA.
- Use the liaison officers as a resource is identifying needed skill needs we provide them with a long, medium and short range needs
- Assist them to identify curriculum changes and design majors to match

future needs of USDA

- The 1890s can develop curriculum for agencies' recruitment and current employees development. The establishment of a complete schedule that can be made available to USDA entities of recruitment days, job fairs, and onsite hiring.
- Work with 1890 Liaison Officers to provide input to University Administrators regarding future job needs of the Department. This input should assist the Administrators with adjusting curriculums to meet those job needs.

4. Utilize People Paid to Address Human Cap USDA SEPMs HR and HQ Resources

- 26 DAMs Program Delivery
- Have them provide expected skill needs and areas
- Use data analysis, skills gap analysis, and other pertinent information from the workforce plans of USDA Agencies to acquire snapshot of current status of AA employees. This data will serve as baselines to measure
- Brief on current trends on the future and the forecast for retention. Exit interviews for those employees that are leaving in all categories.
- The exercise of authority to implement workforce planning strategies that shows value of human capital.
- Hiring authority changes would they recommend. What is the current recruitment mix based on RSNOD. Where are the under representation areas and what is the plan to reduce or eliminate these pockets of under representation.
- Have them provide Human Capitol Plan
- AAAC meet with DAMs and provided specific analysis and obtain commitment if differs from Human Capitol Plan
- Civil Rights SEPMs
- Can provide detailed workforce analysis that identifies areas of deficiency. Can provide periodic (monthly, quarterly) workforce monitoring data.
- SEPMs are in close communication with AA employees and AA employee organizations. They can provide current information on various barriers and specific needs in the AA community and suggest ways to eliminate these barriers. This can passed on the Secretary.
- USDA HQ Staff Resources
- Develop a coordinated effort for retention, development and maximum use of USDA employees.
- We must get by in from these offices to ensure effective changes HR Professionals
- Have HR provide a list of tools available to help us in meeting our objectives

5. Utilize Communication & Discussion Avenues

- Internet Based Collaborative Tools

- Could be used to conduct focus group discussions on particular topics under consideration by the AAAC.
- Conduct group training at remote locations i.e. HBCU as sites for training locations
- Listening Sessions
- I feel that listening sessions is a good tool for AAAC it has help up to get the word out, but we still have a ways to go. The listening session we have had so far has impact a lot of people. We receive good feed back from all 4 sessions. So I really feel that we should continue them.
- Not very useful unless designed to specifically get feedback on AA issues of importance to USDA employees and for making recommendations to the Diversity Advisory Council.
- Use the listening sessions to let USDA employees know that there is a voice for AA USDA employees that care about their career advancement, development and future goals within USDA's workforce environment.
- The AAAC must review and analyze listening sessions done and see if there is information that can be used and if there needs to be other sessions
- Video Conferences
- It is good to have video conferences because it will reach so many people that can not reach the location were the conferences is held.
- Based on the limited resources of travel and time, it is essential that the AAAC utilize the tools of mass communication through videoconference networks that are currently owned by USDA within mission areas. This will enable AAAC to share new initiatives, pilot programs and current news. This is a tool of educating, training, making aware and informing internal and external customers.

6. Establish Relationships /Partnerships Educational Institutions / HBCU's

- Provide these institutions with our projected future needs and goals
- Identify USDA offices to assist with developing curriculum
- The HBCU have a multitude of resources among the faculty and the student body. Many of the faculty are trained in areas prefect for USDA. They often want to make a change in career and crossing over to USDS is a win/win situation for both the person and USDA. They can also find among the students candidates for some USDA needs.
- Provided them with updated information from AAAC. Also recruit from those schools.

7. Engage Employee Organizations / Unions

- Employee Organizations
- Bring comments from other employees in the agency that affect African American in USDA.

8. Determine how to use Media Black and Otherwise, to reach AA Community

- Use Black media to advertise organizational events of African American in USDA.

- Have to be dealt with very carefully. The media have their own sense of what is newsworthy.

9. Engage Other Tools as Appropriate

- Community Based Orgs
- Use the community organizations that already have established networks instead of reinventing the wheel because these organizations have the established resources in tack that can assist the AAAC to get to the sources that can bring more qualified AA into the USDA workforce.
- National Finance Center
- Collaborate with Other Advisory Councils
- Seek information on successful programs that they know of
- Consultant to Facilitate
- Useful, if their role is clear and there is a real need. Otherwise, Staff could carry out function.
- Make the connection of resources within USDA and community organizations.

10. Collaborate with Other Federal Agencies

- Use diversity components

Managers and Supervisors Session Agenda

Introduction

Review Mission / Vision / Objectives of AAAC

Discussion on Overall Approach

ID Skill Categories for Future – From Skill Analysis

- Prioritize Based on Strategic Importance (10Critical to Success 1Not Really Needed)

View of Current Availability

- (10 Readily Available in Qty 1Un Available in Quantity)

ID Current or Proposed Scheme to Close Skill Gap in general

- Prioritize – Based on most likely to succeed (10Will be done and Succeed 1Waste of Time)

ID Ideas for Improving AA Participation

Internal – xfer / Promotion

Internal – Skill enhancement

External – Hiring

- Prioritize – Based on most likely to improve AA participation in Future USDA Careers (10Critical to be Done 1Waste of Time)
- Ideas on USDA Accountabilities – Measures

To whom should the Secretary look to for leadership/support on this effort?

Involvement Matrix – How Involved will you or your function in implementing Ideas

10I will take a leading role

6I will participate

2I will provide input only

Inhibitors (Time permitting)

- Prioritize – Based on Inhibitor to increasing AA Involvement

Immediate Next Steps & Feedback

Introduction

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Additional Inputs Via Interview

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13. Dr. Karen James Import Export Veterinary Services, ACES
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Identify & Prioritize USDA Skill Gap Closing Efforts

The participants were asked to assess the USDA Skill gap closing efforts underway. They were asked to assign a weight to each effort based on their management judgment of how effective the effort will eventually be if no change is made to the way the effort is currently being implement.

For the Senior Managers, only the SES CDP effort received a very favorable assessment.

Participant Instructions:

Rate the efforts

1-Won't be effective as implemented

5-Some what effective as implemented

10-Will be very effective as implemented

Rate each effort independently

Skill Gap Closing Effort	Mean	Weighted Score
1. SESCDP	7.22	64.98
2. Educational training opportunities	6.78	61.02
3. Recruitment/Retention	6.67	60.03
4. Training	6.44	57.96
5. Leadership Training	6.33	56.97
6. Implement mentoring programs	6.22	55.98
7. Leadership development programs tied into targeted positions	6.22	55.98
8. Diversity Training	6.22	55.98
9. Human	6.00	54.00
10. Diversity Management	6.00	54.00
11. Development of a learning management system	5.89	53.01
12. Human capitol plan	5.56	50.04
13. Selection / Review Panel	5.44	48.96
14. Accountability	5.44	48.96
15. Design college courses to prepare students for USDA employment	5.33	47.97
16. Improvement of Interpersonal SKILLS	5.11	45.99
17. Executive Coaching	4.89	44.01
18. Workforce planning committees	4.56	41.04
19. Multiple grade vacancies	4.44	39.96
20. Customer service	3.75	30.00

Weighted Score (average rating) x (no. of managers rating the effort)

Brainstorm on Existing Skill Gap Efforts

Participant Instructions

How can the Efforts be enhanced to Increase AA Participation in USDA Careers? Identify Measures that the Secretary could monitor to indicate success.

1. SESCDP

- A greater effort should be implemented to make sure all eligible candidates are aware of the program.
- The process should not rely solely on the written application materials but should also include a personal interview to assess an individual's interpersonal skills.

Improve for AA Outcomes

- Diversified selection panel.
- Senior management in an agency should encourage employees to apply for the SESCDP to encourage more diversity in the senior ranks.
- More training during SESCDP for ALL employees in the program on valuing diversity so that this new cadre of senior executives will mentor, coach, and promote others into senior positions.
- Ensure announcements of the program is made to African American employees, associations, organizations, and other groups to improve applicants.
- Require that the selectives include equal representation of all the Secretary's Council groups
- Remove final selection approval from agencies
- Assure minority representation at all levels of the process, including application screening and selection.
- Require equal minority percentage distribution of slots i.e. positions.
- If participants who complete the SESCDP had assurances that he/she would be given a fair chance for placement in a position, I think the program would be worth the while.

2. Educational training opportunities

The agency should provide adequate resources giving employees equal access to educational opportunities. Programs are needed to provide employees with Continuous education and training for keeping relevant. All grades should have promotion potential, limiting time in grade by providing training to ensure employees can advance.

Improve for AA Outcomes

- Emphasize training on interpersonal skills working in a diverse workplace, conflict mgmt., communications skills NOT just educational training in technical areas.
- Each employee is provided an annual budget for training

3. Recruitment/Retention

- Recruit more Blacks
- Outreach programs to recruits more Blacks by visiting 1890 colleges, Black churches, and Black organizations. Agency has no problem in hiring at the entry level.

Improve for AA Outcomes

- Hold managers accountable for a diversified workforce.
- Do not advertise the job written for specific persons.
- Need to reward those who are active recruiters on their performance ratings rather than just give everyone fully successful for civil rights element.
- Develop Black alumni groups to help reach out to African Americans for employment opportunities.
- I believe that if USDA senior manager/supervisor were held accountable for recruiting all employees in a fair and equitable fashion, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.
- More recruitment from different schools that currently targeted

4. Training

- Train people in the information technology fields
- Give individuals details in other agencies to learn more about USDA
- Give some kind of overall review of the whole USDA department when they first enter into the department
- Design a generic job description for each position
- Elearning
- IT training

Improve for AA Outcomes

- Interpersonal skills training in the long run is more valuable than IT or technical training
- Training needs to include communication skills, technical, as well as overall education, especially in the mid grades
- Allow all to take training as deem necessary.

5. Leadership Training

- The most serious skills gap in my opinion for USDA employees is in the area of interpersonal skills, e.g. communications, partnering, collaborating, listening, and being inclusive. Our developmental programs tend to emphasize technical and program skills (or IQ) and not social skills (called EQ for emotional quotient). The Department needs to have more programs for employees to improve their soft skills (interpersonal skills) since this is the serious gap area.
- Empowerment
- Consulting skills
- Senior level managers at USDA should be receptive to thinking outside the box.
- Implement new leadership development programs
- USDA is embarking on initiatives to improve leadership development for grades GS912 and grades GS1215

Improve for AA Outcomes

- If we can train our leaders of the future to embrace diversity, then they can do their part to advance AA issues.
- Provide the opportunity for Black employees to attend leadership development programs. Monitor the selection and ensure that there is a mix of all people in each class.
- Hold senior managers accountable for making sure African-American employees are aware of training programs on a timely basis.

6. Implement mentoring programs

- USDA stated a mentoring program in FY02 for employees in USDA. This will help employees address career progression and professional career opportunities through a mentor relationship.
- Mentoring program
- Mentoring programs

Improve for AA Outcomes

- Design mentoring program specifically for AAs to assist with critical skills analysis and marketing strategy to enhance career mobility
- We have an effective African American mentoring program at our agency that helps employees plan and prepare for advancements in their career.
- African Americans who have achieve success need to mentor junior employees and help them move up the career ladder. Every SES and GS15 employee, at the minimum, should mentor an employee.
- Establish funded full time mentoring slots equivalent to a mid-level management intern program. Goal is to give field employees projects to gain experience and exposure for future promotions.
 - Programs could be established on a rotational basis to get employees moving back and form from field to Headquarters positions to prepare them for more senior jobs
- Recognize that there is a direct tie between who gets mentored and who gets key assignments, projects and higher level promotions. Selections are not entirely merit based

7. Leadership development programs tied into targeted positions

Improve for AA Outcomes

- Identify positions that can/will be filled by successful trainees in leadership development programs and fill the position upon completion on the program

8. Diversity Training

- There needs to be more effective training on diversity in the workplace. We need to have training that emphasizes embracing diversity rather than accepting diversity.
- Diversity training is a great tool if the Agency would apply the training.

Improve for AA Outcomes

- Diversity training as a requirement for all employees beginning with the Secretary to the mailroom employee.
- A two-hour module each year doesn't cut it. Managers have to embrace the benefits of diversity and be held accountable for promoting a diverse environment. Now managers can be exclusionary of people and there is no price to pay.
- Monitor who attends diversity training. In some cases white males elect not to attend and people of color are disproportionately represented in the diversity classes.

9. Human Capitol Plan

Improve for AA Outcomes

- Human
- Use the Human Capital Plan under the President's Management Agenda to manage skill gaps. The plan outlines succession planning, leadership, development, recruitment, workforce planning, diversity management, and accountability

Improve for AA Outcomes

- Devise a process to assess the current skill level of AA's and strategy for filling appropriate positions with those already possess the appropriate skills
- Make certain Blacks are included in any succession planning.
- Ensure that managers know if there is a goal to increase diverse representation for a position. Don't assume that they know. Be specific and hold them accountable if goals are unmet
- HR should like at how people are hired and at what grades and address any practices or trends that do not support diversity and inclusion objectives
- Onus should not be on the new employee to overcome supervisor subjectivity and systemic practices that limit progress

10. Diversity Management

- USDA has included strategies in its human capital plan to improve the diversity posture of USDA
- Upward mobility programs

Improve for AA Outcomes

11. Development of a learning management system

- The agency is currently developing an Elearning system that will help employees improve training and education by taking online courses and education from colleges and universities

Improve for AA Outcomes

12. Selection / Review Panel

- Selection/Review panels should be representative of USDA's workforce.
- Consulting skills

Improve for AA Outcomes

13. Accountability

Improve for AA Outcomes

- Accountability means accountability. Disciplinary actions should be applied as applicable to managers/supervisors. When fault/discrimination is found, do not move manager to another position. Do not allow early retirement.
- Do not allow no fault settlements.
- Apply real sanctions for perceived discrimination, exclusion and or pre-selection.
- Build into one's civil rights performance measures some measurable.
- Failure to

14. Design college courses to prepare students for USDA employment

- Approximately 8 years ago, FGIS, AMS, and APHIS assembled a group to work with the faculty at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff to develop a degree in Regulatory Science. This degree is housed in the Agriculture Department at the university and is designed to prepare students for careers with regulatory agencies in government (e.g., FDA, EPA, USDA, etc.).

Improve for AA Outcomes

15. Improvement of Interpersonal SKILLS

Improve for AA Outcomes

16. Executive Coaching

Improve for AA Outcomes

- Provide this experience for Black employees.

17. Workforce planning committees

- Program managers responsible for development of numeric action plans to address projected gaps.

Improve for AA Outcomes

18. Multiple grade vacancies

- More jobs are advertised as 7/9/11/12/13. However the Agency need to use diversity

Improve for AA Outcomes

19. Customer service

Improve for AA Outcomes

USDA Inhibitors

1. Managers not embracing diversity

- "Good Ole Boy System"
- "No Accountability by managers/supervisors"

2. Prejudice

- Hate is still alive

3. Holding all supervisors accountable for Diversity

- Leadership training and documentation in performance appraisals is a great way to do this

4. Need culture change at USDA

5. Agency lacking diversity in strategic position
 - Some agencies have all white management teams with the majority of their employee being AA.
 - Hold managers accountable for achieving diversity in their area of responsibility.
6. Leaders Without Guts
7. Failure to hold managers accountable for fair management practices
 - Culture is inherently discriminatory. Senior management accepted norm is the culture believes that minority are inherently inferior, therefore they sincerely belief the behavior(s) are fair and just.
 - This is definitely true. Managers can practice subtle discrimination and get away with it.
 - Managers not being held accountable
 - Failure of AA's who have made it to hire other qualified AA's
 - Realize that some managers just don't care about the advancement and opportunities of Aas. It is not an issue of training. They know and still don't care. The attitude is that I am still here after all the investigations, special commissions and diversity pronouncements. Therefore I will do what I want to do.
8. Competition Among Diversity Groups
 - USDA does not have unlimited opportunities. Diversity groups are competing for promotions, training opportunities, and new jobs. This needs to be recognized and incorporated into strategic human capital plans and workforce analysis.
9. Perceptive of hiring officials that AA's are not competent
10. Politics
 - FSA is too political.
11. Senior managers not rewarded for taking positive steps
12. "Good Ole Boy System"
 - Managers/supervisors are not accountable for their actions
 - Encourage sponsorship in USDA
 - Decision makers are not present at this session.
13. Providing training and then not capitalizing on the newly trained employ
14. AA's not helping AA's
15. Budgets
 - In the last several years, money has not been available for training and other employee programs. Only in the last couple of years has an improvement been made in this area. Many agencies still are not putting sufficient financial resources to improve in this area.
16. Revolving door of senior management following elections
17. Exposure to Opportunities
 - Many Blacks are not given the opportunity and exposure at high levels of the organization. This lack of exposure has hurt advancement opportunities.
18. Failure to resocialize managers
 - Mindset vs. behavior vs. results/consequences
 - These are out of alignment now
19. Women as a substitute for minority
 - A female is a substitute for a minority (person of color)
 - Lack of accountability
 - White female
20. Staff shortages and increasing program delivery requirements creates an environment that does not allow managers sufficient time to train and grow employees with potential. Thus they hire those that already have the skills sets and can hit the ground running. May have nothing to do with not being sensitive to giving minorities a fair chance.

21. External housing and the lack of community and social support in certain rural areas with little or no presence of people of color is a deterrent for minorities to apply for positions that would give them experience.
22. There is a stigma associated with a staff if it is majority Black. White staffs are not stigmatized for being all white.
23. There is no structure for lower grade employees to move up from positions such as administrative support to higher grade program delivery slots. Managers are measured on productivity and training does not count toward their performance goals. Therefore managers do not take the time to develop their personnel .

Prioritize Inhibitors

Participants were asked to rate the inhibitors as a group, identifying the most important inhibitor to be addressed or accounted for based on the negative impact on African American participation in USDA

Items Sorted By Total (Descending)	Average Rating	Weighted Score
1. (Not) Holding all supervisors accountable for Diversity	7.33	65.97
2. Need culture change at USDA	6.86	48.02
3. Failure to hold managers accountable for fair management practices	5.11	45.99
4. "Good Ole Boy System"	7.20	36.00
5. Failure to resocialize managers	6.80	34.00
6. Managers not embracing diversity	5.50	33.00
7. Agency lacking diversity in strategic position	6.20	31.00
8. Exposure to Opportunities	5.00	30.00
9. Perceptive of hiring officials that AA's are not competent	4.83	28.98
10. Revolving door of senior management following elections	4.17	25.02
11. Prejudice	7.00	21.00
12. Competition Among Diversity Groups	4.67	14.01
13. Politics	6.50	13.00
14. Senior managers not rewarded for taking positive steps	4.33	12.99
15. Providing training and then not capitalizing on the newly trained employ	3.25	13.00
16. Budgets	6.00	12.00
17. Leaders Without Guts	4.00	8.00
18. AA's not helping AA's	4.00	8.00
19. Women as a substitute for minority	2.33	6.99

USDA AAAC Managers Feedback and Next Steps

1. Questions for AAAC

- None
- How long will it take for us to get some kind of report on the way this is headed?
- When will recommendations be presented to the Secretary? How long will it take for the Secretary to respond and how long will it take for the USDA community to be made aware of the Secretary's response?
- What will you do with this information?
- Will we be able to see the information from the other two earlier sessions?
- Will there be an opportunity for other managers to provide feedback on these issues?
- I would like for you to share the results of these efforts (the report to the Secretary) with all the individuals who participated or helped in any ways so they can see they might have made a difference.

2. Next Steps

- Shirley explanation up was sufficient for the next step.
- The AAAC needs to start at the top with the Secretary, Deputy Sec., Agency Heads and really get their commitment to supporting diversity. A strong leadership chain can bring about change but if any link isn't on board the process breaks down.
- Recommend having the Secretary convene a focus group of Asst Secretaries and have the Secretary or an Under Secretary tell them the Secretary's expectation for their help in resolving the top issues identified by the AAAC and DAC
- Develop an action plan. Get message up the chain to the Secretary. Communication improvement steps to employees. Many don't know what to do. Get the message on the human capital plan out to African Americans. Knowledge is key to success.
- Make sure all the comments reach the Secretary and action sufficient action items and responses are filtered down throughout the department.
- Hold all USDA managers accountable for their actions with respect to hiring, retaining, empowering, promoting, and coaching of all departmental employees!!
- How can you ensure that this will be the document that will be acted upon?

3. Feedback to AAAC on Session

- I enjoyed the session because I benefited from the discussion around the room and the brainstorming on the issues.
- Excellent session. I think some positive things can happen if you use the information and take action on it.
- Very open, enjoyed discussions.
- This is a good effort. Don't let it die. Don't let it drag on too long. Provide periodic updates (quarterly, perhaps) so people will know what is going on. No feedback may be interpreted as any action.
- Actually I am impressed with the process. Maybe a bit more typing than I need but ok.
- Think of this as another opportunity to have USDA do what's right for its employees.

4. Feedback to Hudson Group on Session

- I think when you talk about the skills gap you should do it for two groups African Americans and those who are in a position to advance African Americans (the leaders). The critical gap can be with the leaders and have little to do with the KSA's of AA's.
- As always a topic of this complexity can't be addressed in 2 hours. What you lost in time you made up in quality. The success of this type of forum is dependent on interaction of the targeted group and the facilitator(s).
- My only hope is that you will be with the AAAC throughout this entire process.
- Excellent facilitation. Appreciate your patience in leading this group and helping all of us to recognize that positive things can happen in the future if we take action.
- Please provide participants more background if possible about the process. You did an excellent job and covered a lot of ground in a short period!!
- Your ability to calmly address our issues was terrific. You became frustrated with our disruptions of your plans, but you were patient.
- Need to explain how to use the computer before you start your session. Provide some beginning examples and let folks in the room try them.
- Thank you for your role in assisting USDA in addressing a sensitive and important issue

Liaison of 1890's Agenda

Introduction

Review Mission / Vision / Objectives of AAAC

Discussion on Overall Approach

Given these Strategic Actions for each, what are ways the AAAC and USDA can better utilize **liaison officers**?

- How might USDA leverage 1890 officers to assist with the recruitment process and filling USDA positions with graduating students?
- How can AAAC establish better communications with 1890 liaison officers?

What services and resources are available at **1890 schools** to met the educational needs of USDA employees?

Specifically what nontraditional or alternative learning programs are available?

Combine Strategic Actions and 1890 school resources

Involvement Matrix – How Involved will you or your function in implementing Ideas

10I will take a leading role

6I will participate

2I will provide input only

Inhibitors (Time permitting)

- Prioritize – Based on Inhibitor to increasing AA Involvement

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What Better Ways to Use 1890 Officer

1. Retention of Current Employees
 - Retention
2. Recruitment
 - Secondary school summer programs, CBG's for recruitment There is a need for more career fairs at high school, create more magnet schools for agriculture and provide training to career/guidance counselors at nonag magnet schools.
 - Recruitment/Retention
 - With some guidance from USDA, we as liaisons should be able to better recruit bright minds into the Department for future job opportunities, and eventually solid careers.
 - Retention... through the usage of better communication skills and sound advice, we can assure that those students will stay with the Department.
 - Recruitment at the junior high school level introduce agricultural and natural resources, and natural sciences
 - USDA should offer more summer programs for high school /college students
3. The USDA should empower the Liaison
 - The ALO's should be used as a outreach source through their recruitment efforts
 - Provide Liaison Officers with wide latitudes to explore non traditional methods to conduct outreach
4. Minority Employee recruitment
 - Incorporate Liaison Officers into employment process at the beginning, when the agency is aware if the vacancy. Have a real job that will be filled in a short timeframe (no longer than 45 days). This primarily for PFT jobs.
 - Recruitment of minority Students
 - USDA Careers should be taken to the junior high school and explain about the benefits.
 - Make greater use of the liaison officers during USDA recruitment drives.
 - Timely recruitment in sharing announcements
 - Greater latitude in filling positions
 - Use the Liaisons to make recommendations for certain jobs.
5. Information source
 - Utilize usda/1890 Liaison's opinions in issues concerning 1890 university
 - Utilize/take recommendations of liaisons
6. Training Employees
 - Promoting the use of 1890 universities to conduct and participate in training activities that address specific job series where gaps exist and others. This will provide universities a greater opportunities to see the need for focusing on skill gaps.
7. Increase support of the USDA/1890 Task Force
 - The AAC should use it's clout to ensure full participation of the USDA agencies to get behind the this effort.
8. Provide data to support objective assessment of problem
9. Increased communication with USDA Agency Heads
 - Greater visibility within USDA

- Increased Contacts with USDA Agency State Personnel and Human Resource M
- 10. Counseling Steerage in various career fields
 - MORE educational one on one with students
 - Partner Liaison Officers with scholars to gain insight into what works.
- 11. USDA can provide SCEP, STEP opportunities for students at 1890's.
- 12. Talking to university administrators
- 13. Use liaison officers more effectively during orientation sessions for the
- 14. By utilizing the ALO cadre in introduction of programs
 - Provide the cadre with information and support of agency managers

Prioritize Use of Officers

	Mean	Weighted Score
1. Recruitment, Secondary school summer programs, CBG's for recruitment	6.36	89.04
2. Increased communication with USDA Agency Heads	5.56	88.96
3. By utilizing the ALO cadre in introduction of programs	5.36	75.04
4. Increase support of the USDA/1890 Task Force	5.69	73.97
5. The USDA should empower the Liaison	6.78	61.02
6. Counseling Steerage in various career fields	5.67	51.03
7. Minority Employee recruitment	5.56	50.04
8. Information source	4.80	48.00
9. USDA can provide SCEP, STEP opportunities for students at 1890's.	5.25	42.00
10. Retention of Current Employees	4.44	39.96
11. Use liaison officers more effectively during orientation sessions	3.50	35.00
12. Training Employees	3.63	29.04
13. Provide data to support objective assessment of problem	4.40	22.00
14. Talking to university administrators	2.40	12.00

Services and Resources @ 1890 Schools

1. On Campus Training Programs
 - USDA can utilize Univ
 - Source for training targeted audiences by providing distant learning opportunities utilizing the faculty and administrators
 - Human capital development
2. More resources
 - Continue/increase financial support of programs on campus.
 - Increase scholarship opportunities for students.
3. Place IPA's on campus for 2 yr. periods in specific subject areas to

- Teach and interact with students, faculty and administrators.
4. Hire Students
 - When a student is hired and retained this provides for exponential mutual benefits. There is nothing more commanding than developing human capital
 5. Outreach/Communicating Programs to USDA Clientele
 - Outreach
 - Small farmers, summer high school internships, collaborative initiatives with CBO's, committee membership in campus groups, membership in nontraditional groups re: sierra club, etc. This would provide info to clients that are not our normal customers.
 - Outreach to small farmers
 - Jesse, you always have good ideas. Rozier
 - Outreach to minority clientele
 - Distance learning for rural citizens with limited transportation
 - Summer programs for youths and other demographic groups
 - Night School for working moms and dads
 - Reading and writing sessions at university for earning GRE for entry level positions with USDA
 - Use as an outreach vehicle to serve underserved
 - Use the university's coop extension youth outreach programs to introduce sciences
 - Outreach to minority clientele
 - Providing fire behavior and basic firefighting training to the public for eligibility entrance to fight fires w/ USDA
 6. Provide addition grant resources
 7. Determine strengths and weaknesses of specific programs at each school.
 - Use various schools to educate students in particular majors.
 8. Oversight of USDA programs to assure that funds are utilized for purpose intended.
 - Reviewing Program Implementation
 9. Each USDA agency should have a contract with a couple Liaisons to:
 - Revisit current agreements to maintain similar goals
 - Meet regularly on ways to enhance the relationship
 - Develop a visitor's speaking program, which would have the agency official or designee speaking before groups of students twice a year.
 - Invite the Liaison Officers to the agencies to meet with Agency officials at least twice per year.
 10. Utilize 1890 Extension in helping the community get affordable housing
 - Low-income families need assistance concerning USDA programs.
 11. Using the faculty to save as consultants or advisors
 12. Place facilities/offices with permanent employees on campus.
 13. Be visible (high ranking USDA officials) on campus.
 - Develop a program of regular visitation by these leaders.
 - Walk the walk
 - College wide meetings admn. council, research, extension meetings
 14. Faculty development
 15. Strengthening exiting partnerships by making use of existing resources
 - Strengthening existing partnership by maximizing existing USDA resources
 - Better utilize those programs which materialized from USDA sponsored pro
 - Enter to more detail agreements with the University to utilize programs and equipment. GIS, etc
 16. Utilize ALO as part of administrative arm to deliver programs and service
 - Liaison be involved in administrative council meetings

17. Distance learning shared involving shared teaching between universities.
 - Expertise for things could be consolidated to increase resources.
18. Universities as mediators on issues within their state

Prioritize 1890 Opportunities

Items Sorted By Total (Descending)	Average	Weighted Score
1. Outreach /Communicating Programs to USDA Clientele	7.21	100.94
2. (Supply) More resources (Scholarships)	5.62	73.06
3. Utilize ALO as part of administrative arm to deliver programs and service	6.70	67.00
4. On Campus Training Programs	6.25	50.00
5. Strengthening exiting partnerships by making use of existing resources	5.33	47.97
6. Oversight of USDA programs to assure that funds are utilized for purpose	5.88	47.04
7. Place facilities/offices with permanent employees on campus.	4.78	43.02
8. Hire Students	5.25	42.00
9. Provide addition grant resources	4.44	39.96
10. Place IPA's on campus for 2 yr. periods in specific subject areas to	5.43	38.01
11. Be visible (high ranking USDA officials) on campus.	3.67	33.03
12. Determine strengths and weaknesses of specific programs at each school.	3.67	22.02
13. Using the faculty to save as consultants or advisors	2.86	20.02
14. Each USDA agency should have a contract with a couple Liaisons to:	3.25	13.00
15. Utilize 1890 Extension in helping the community get affordable housing	3.00	12.00
16. Faculty development	5.50	11.00
17. Distance learning shared involving shared teaching between universities.	1.33	3.99
18. (Use) Universities as mediators on issues within their state	3.00	3.00

Un-Prioritized Inhibitors to AA Involvement

1. Convincing management that these ideas are honest and implement able.
2. Lack of resources
3. Administrative commitment.
4. Management has to buy into AAAC
5. Lack of a commitment from executives.
6. I don't think many USDA employees are aware of AAAC. Especially at the "Field level"
7. Huge financial resources required to accomplish the proposed.
8. Limited resources
9. Changes in administration
10. Apathy from agency heads and employees

Questions, Next Steps & Feedback on Session

Questions for AAAC

- Will this information be used?
- None
- Who will use this info?
- What recommendations have AASC made to the Secretary? What is the time line? for implementation?
- How do I get on your mailing list? I would like to know more about your org.
- Do you have a strategic plan and, when implemented, what impacts do you think it will have on strengthening USDA's service to the country.
- How will this info be used to improve USDA and instead for diversity?
- Where are you going with all of things you are doing? Is the Secretary of Agriculture "really sincere" about making changes? within USDA?
- When will actions be implemented for the program?
- I hope that this effort will result in positive result
- What are constraints that limit your ability to impact real change?
- What can we do to make these recommendations come to fruition?
- How will you implement this project across administrations?
- How is this significantly different from other programs? (Workforce 2000
- I need more information on your group (the make up).
- Will the ALOs be involved in helping implement and executing the Secy's program?
- When will the Secty begin implementing these items?
- I feel this exercise will be helpful
- Will we get a copy of
- Will we get a summary of this exercise?

2. Next Steps

- Implement some of suggestions rec'd. today.
- Okay
- More feedback sessions with focused and other groups/individuals like this one.
- Take a serious look at the recommendation made today and utilize
- Let's see some changes for the positive.
- Make use of the recommendations made by the Liaison Officers this date
- How will we be informed of the utilization of our comments?
- Put some of these ideas to use
- Work with the Liaisons to implement the recommendation.
- Share this information with all individuals that have a stake in solving the problems or implementation.
- The next step might be to actually visit a number of the 1890 schools

3. Feedback to AAAC on Session

- This is and was an excellent opportunity to involve the ALO's and this make me (us) feel like a part of USDA.
- It was good to have input

- Very well done.
- This was an excellent session and I truly enjoyed it
- Thanks for this opportunity. This group has something to share based on their unique role within USDA and the 1890's.
- What time line will be used to implement suggestions?
- Thanks for the inclusion
- This was a very good session and should have more.
- Very productive and look forward to seeing the recommendations move forward.
- I want the cadre to be utilized by the AAAC
- Very interesting and I was glad to have input
- Thank you for the opportunity to give our input into this important and needed venture. Please use the Liaison Officers to assist in the implementation of this program.

4. Feedback to Hudson group on Sessions

- I think your efforts were great
- This first time participating in an electronic data collection process, I think this GREAT!!!!
- This was great a lot of fun, a new experience.
- Very well done.
- Fantastic, very well done in a short time
- The technology worked without a hitch. That must be a record. THANKS
- Good job
- One of the best sessions I have ever attended.
- Very well done
- Good session very good group.
- Job well done. Thanks!!

HR Session

Introduction

Review Mission / Vision / Objectives of AAAC

Discussion on Overall Approach

ID Skill Categories for Future – From Skill Analysis

- Prioritize Based on Strategic Importance (10Critical to Success 1Not Really Needed)

View of Current Availability

- (10 Readily Available in Qty 1Un Available in Quantity)

ID Current or Proposed Scheme to Close Skill Gap in general

- Prioritize – Based on most likely to succeed (10Will be done and Succeed 1Waste of Time)

ID Ideas for Improving AA Participation

Internal – xfer / Promotion

Internal – Skill enhancement

External – Hiring

- Prioritize – Based on most likely to improve AA participation in Future USDA Careers (10Critical to be Done 1Waste of Time)
- Ideas on USDA Accountabilities – Measures

To whom should the Secretary look to for leadership/support on this effort?

Involvement Matrix – How Involved will you or your function in implementing Ideas

10I will take a leading role

6I will participate

2I will provide input only

Inhibitors (Time permitting)

- Prioritize – Based on Inhibitor to increasing AA Involvement

Immediate Next Steps & Feedback

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Review Skills/Knowledge Areas

Build a comprehensive list of the core skill and knowledge areas required for the future success of USDA. Technical, Operational, Managerial, Political,

Prioritize based on Importance

Which Skill or Knowledge areas are most important to USDA Success? Rank Each Item on 1-10 scale with 10 being the most important (Use only 4 "10" the rest must be "6" or lower)

Skill or Knowledge Area	Mean	Weighted Score
1. Communications Oral Written	9.69	125.97
2. Customer Service	8.08	96.96
3. Technical Credibility	8.09	88.99
4. Leadership Skill	7.42	89.04
5. Political Savvy Skills	6.67	80.04
6. Technology Skills	6.33	75.96
7. Managing Change	7.00	70.00
8. Managing Diversity People Skills	6.60	66.00
9. Building Coalitions	6.00	66.00
10. Attention to Detail	5.42	65.04
11. Team Player	5.82	64.02
12. Supervisory	6.20	62.00
13. Project Management	6.20	62.00
14. Good Work Ethics / Attitude	6.20	62.00
15. Education or experience in chosen Area	6.20	62.00
16. Ethical Integrity	6.10	61.00
17. Learning and Understanding Culture	6.56	59.04
18. Communication skills for all employees	6.44	57.96
19. Interpersonal Skills	6.11	54.99
20. Knowledge of Agency Mission	5.44	48.96
21. Managing Information	5.22	46.98
22. Managing Human Resources	5.50	44.00
23. Emotional Intelligence	4.78	43.02
24. Effective Delegation	5.25	42.00
25. Managing financial	5.13	41.04
26. Time Management	5.13	41.04
27. Using a Mentor (be a good Protégé)	4.33	38.97

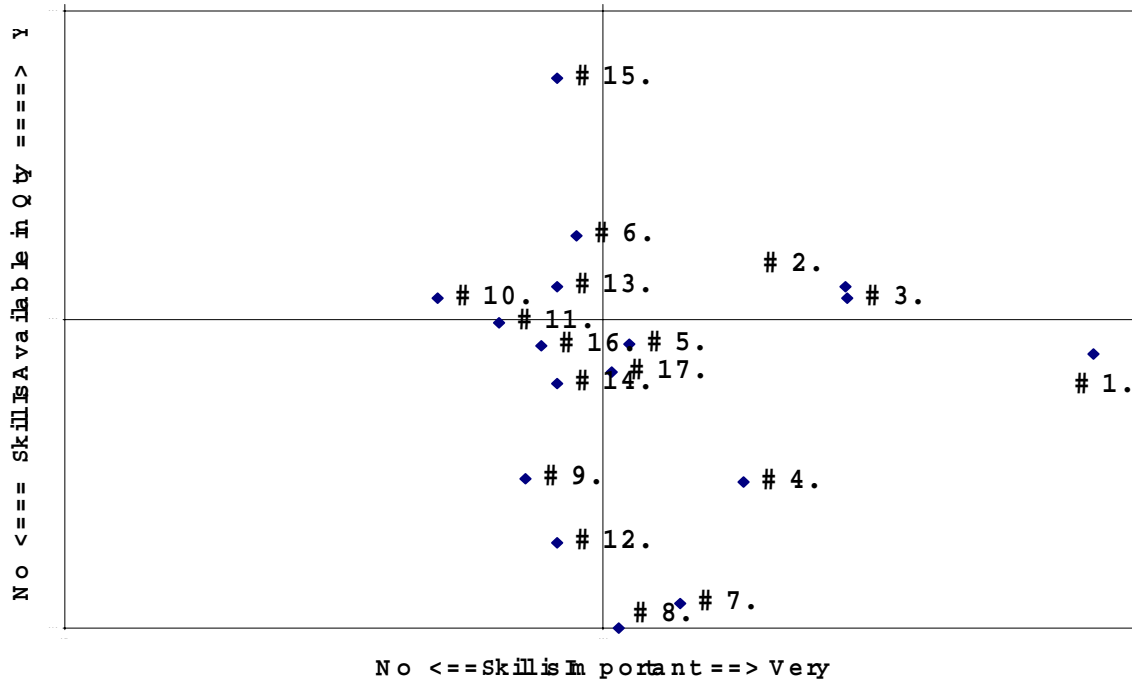
Rank Skills by Availability

Rate each Skill or Knowledge Area based on your perception of current availability.
1 not available, 5 available, 10 available in surplus qty

	Mean	Weighted Score
1. Education or experience in chosen Area	6.50	78.00
2. Project Management	5.08	66.04
3. Technology Skills	5.42	65.04
4. Technical Credibility	5.00	65.00
5. Customer Service	5.08	60.96
6. Political Savvy Skills	4.69	60.97
7. Attention to Detail	5.00	60.00
8. Communications Oral Written	4.62	60.06
9. Team Player	4.83	57.96
10. Ethical Integrity	4.67	56.04
11. Learning and Understanding Culture	4.50	54.00
12. Good Work Ethics / Attitude	4.42	53.04
13. Building Coalitions	3.77	49.01
14. Leadership Skill	3.75	45.00
15. Supervisory	3.33	39.96
16. Managing Change	2.92	35.04
17. Managing Diversity People Skills	2.75	33.00

Human Resources View of Skills For USDA Success

- Indicates Relative Importance



Rank		Value Score	Available Score
# 1.	Communications Oral Written	9.69	4.62
# 2.	Customer Service	8.08	5.08
# 3.	Technical Credibility	8.09	5.00
# 4.	Leadership Skill	7.42	3.75
# 5.	Political Savvy Skills	6.67	4.69
# 6.	Technology Skills	6.33	5.42
# 7.	Managing Change	7.00	2.92
# 8.	Managing Diversity People Skills	6.60	2.75
# 9.	Building Coalitions	6.00	3.77
# 10.	Attention to Detail	5.42	5.00
# 11.	Team Player	5.82	4.83
# 12.	Supervisory	6.20	3.33
# 13.	Project Management	6.20	5.08
# 14.	Good Work Ethics / Attitude	6.20	4.42
# 15.	Education or experience in chosen Area	6.20	6.50
# 16.	Ethical Integrity	6.10	4.67
# 17.	Learning and Understanding Culture	6.56	4.50

What are Current Skill Gap Efforts

Participant Instructions

ID the current efforts underway to address the USDA Skill gaps. And explain the intent of the effort. Id Measures of Success if known.

Prioritize Efforts

The participants were asked to assess the USDA Skill gap closing efforts underway. They were asked to assign a weight to each effort based on their management judgment of how effective the effort will eventually be if no change is made to the way the effort is currently being implement.

For the HR Managers, none of the efforts received a very favorable assessment (above 7.0 out of 10).

Participant Instructions:

Rate the efforts 1 won't be effective as implemented; 5-Some what effective as implemented;

10-Will be very effective as implemented

Rate each effort independently

Skill Gap Closing Efforts		Mean	Weighted Score
1	Extensive Employee Development Efforts	6.50	91.00
2	On Going Training	5.79	81.06
3	Campus Outreach	5.50	77.00
4	Strengthen Performance Elements	5.07	70.98
5	SES Training	5.31	69.03
6	Human Capital Management Plan	5.08	66.04
7	Recruiting A Diverse Workforce	4.71	65.94
8	Skill Assessment For Current Employees Learning Management System	5.42	65.04
9	Recruitment Initiatives At Targeted Univ.	4.50	63.00
10	Mentoring Program	4.77	62.01
11	Train Supervisors & Managers In Coaching And Counseling Skills	4.14	57.96
12	EGov Program	5.18	56.98
13	Career Change Opportunities	4.38	56.94
14	Establishment Of The Diversity Councils	4.31	56.03
15	Team Building Sessions	3.58	42.96
16	Strategic Plan To Change Culture	2.82	31.02

Ideas Increasing AA Participation

Participant Instructions

How can the Efforts be enhanced to Increase AA Participation in USDA Careers? Identify Measures that the Secretary could monitor to indicate success.

1. Extensive employee development efforts

- Includes on line training, leadership training, and a national employee development team with ongoing training efforts.
- Training and development
- Program Workshop for GS 18
- The detail of this workshop is unknown to me at this time.

Ideas & Measurement

- Offer more career enhancement opportunities.
- Ensure there is a system in place to monitor participation in employee development opportunities to ensure fair distribution of these opportunities
- Resources and time need to be available.
- Make it mandatory that supervisors aggressively enhance employee skills for both present and future positions
- The money is not put into investing in people. It can be measured by the willingness from the top managers to speak and mandate policy for this to come to pass.
- Although programs are available, the time it takes to take training takes away from job responsibilities. Many employees do not make the time.
- Every employee should be responsible for his/her own employee development.
- Training funds should be a line item in the budget and will show a commitment to employee development
- Renew thinking about who is really responsible in the training & development process.
- The training or organizational development effort, such as coaching or mentoring, should be closely planned with the individual. This should be part of a negotiated supervisor and employee plan for career development.
- Training should be a line item for USDA to develop programs and services needed to develop and maintain an informed and productive workforce.
- The Management/organization has to take employee development seriously.
- Most of the time employees are told the training he/she requires is not related to the job he/she performs, but training is for employees development in various aspects for future career opportunities regardless the current assignment. Without training employees do not achieve development experience, skills and as a result they do not get promoted. On going training is vital for employees development. The management should change the selective culture it plays and be honest and open.
- Employees are motivated, missions and goals of the office is being met thru increased productivity
- Make extensive use of career enhancement. As an HR person, I can make managers aware of this recruitment option and talk with them about what is required to implement.
- I think the Secretary of Agriculture should be informed and enlightened by employees themselves at employees meeting.

- Line supervisors should be trained, informed, and enlightened on how to help, motivate and empower the employees they supervise. Most supervisors are not trained on supervision. By the virtue of their position, they just start supervising and they really lack the skills, sensitivity, impartiality, tact.
- The discriminatory and exclusive culture of the Department should be abolished forever.

2. Ongoing training

- Improve skills currently missing
- More technical training
- In-house Training
- Online training
- Create a continuous learning organization
- Increase technical expertise
- Elearning
- Provide easily accessible and affordable skill building opportunities for all USDA employees in all locations
- Cross-functional training
- Workshops
- Paying college tuition to obtain a degree or higher degree

Ideas & Measurement

- Training does not always have to be paid training. We can learn different subject areas or functions within our area that are outside of current duties. Management needs to encourage and employees need to seek this.
- Have information about all training opportunities readily available to employees at all levels
- There are a variety of Training Seminars that will enhance ability that are no cost to the agency
- Make sure that the completion of these types of training is documented on their IDP's and mark off as completed to measure accomplishments.
- Managers should be held accountable for their employees' Individual Development Plan
- All employees should be held accountable for their Individual Development Plan
- Agencies should be monitored for how much money they spend on training and who gets the training
- Note the level of involvement of workforce in the actual recommendation, planning and implementation of ongoing training.
- Make extensive efforts to inform workforce of opportunities available and the extent of management support and commitment.
- Training is not priority over work requirements
- Action: I recommend that USDA offer a college tuition assistance program for qualifying employees (most of which are African-American).

3. Campus outreach

- New blood and new ideas
- Attending local colleges and universities

Ideas & Measurement

- Start outreach at junior high and high school level...college is sometimes too late

- Conducting workshops and briefings to provide information about the different career opportunities within USDA. Meet with staff and faculty to establish cooperative relationships.
- Campus outreach should not stop at career/job fairs.
- Adequate funding, resources, staff and planning.
- Being more visible on college campus and allowing recruiters to not only talk about job opportunities but also bring job announcements with them for students.
- A different approach to campus outreach should be developed to focus on developing strategies for ongoing programs and initiatives that include human/monetary/equipment resources to develop these programs. Programs should include the K12 feeder schools.
- Develop partnerships with inner city high schools providing summer employment and training session, which will afford students the opportunity for exposure to federal work exposure and stress the importance and benefits of a college degree.
- It should be an essential effort to develop internships designed to match a college student with the promise of an actual job keyed to their field of endeavor. USDA recruiters should target campus student minority groups. Also, invite them to USDA employment locations at our expense for visits. They should see how we actually operate on a daily basis, instead of a slick performance.
- More college students are being hired, mentored and are climbing the management chain

4. Strengthen performance elements

Ideas & Measurement

- All agencies are not still on the element system.
- Every manager should be held accountable for his/her responsibility if not meeting the responsibility, train for improvement or transferred to another position.
- Performance plan need to be developed that accurately reflects and communicates with is expected from the employee. They should be realistic and attainable.
- Provide more specific training in areas of challenge, i.e. how to develop sound performance elements & standards.
- Strengthening performance elements is good. However, unless one has the training tool, albeit formal or OJT, this element could possibly set the employee up for failure.

5. SES Training

Ideas & Measurement

- Make information about this opportunity available to lower levels to give them something to which to aspire...if they understand the SES, they can adjust career goals to attain this status
- There are not many Black SESs in USDA. However, when SES training is held, time should be given to implement the training when individuals return to the work place. There should be follow up in three months, six months, and one year later. This would be the instrument to measure the success of the individuals
- There are not enough African Americans allowed the opportunity to become SES status. There is a glass ceiling when it comes to African Americans in the SES level. The measure is simple just take a look at each mission area and see the numbers each quarter. This will show you how stagnate the efforts to make sure SES level has an even playing field.
- The entire federal SES program is limited to blacks because the agency rarely recognizes that black employees are high potential individuals with leadership ability. This has nothing to do with performance, degree or ability. Unless the culture and attitudes are changed, then black representation will be limited in the SES ranks.

- More employees are being promoted and mentored into the SES managing major Agencies, programs, and large budgets.

6. Human Capital Management Plan

- Imposed strategic plan element linked to politic savvy

Ideas & Measurement

- Ensure adequate funding and staff support to fully implement the HC plan at USDA and within each agency
- All managers should be held accountable for the proposals and timelines set out in the Plan
- All managers should be trained on valuing training and scheduling adequate time for employees to participate. Employees are valued and the mission and goals of the office are increased as well as productivity
- This effort does no good if once the succession plan is in place if there is no mandate from the Secretary that this plan must be implemented.
- All USDA employees are aware of this plan. Lots of activity are being generated around the elements of this plan There is a five year action plan in place that has benchmarks for phased completion of elements

7. Recruiting a diverse workforce

- To provide a balanced number of personnel to reflect the general population
- Targeted Advertising
- Nontraditional outreach
- Exposing USDA opportunities to areas usually ignored or bypassed by traditional outreach efforts
- Scholars Program

Ideas & Measurement

- Establish personal relationships between the recruitment source and an employee already in the field.
- Hire the BEST person for the job.
- Each Agency should be monitored and report on their hiring practices
- This effort begins with management or the selecting supervisor. Management needs to be educated on the various cultures if we want to see improvement.
- Make diversity candidates the BEST for the job through aggressive early outreach and mentoring
- Advertise in minority media.
- Black employers are managing major Agencies, major programs, and large budgets.
- Establish a personal relationship with the applicant source.

8. Skill assessment for current employees learning management system

Ideas & Measurement

- Individual development plan
- Select a viable survey instrument and apply it Department wide. Effect change based on the results of the survey.
- A tool/survey should be developed for all USDA employees to identify the skills and experience
- Identify skills, but then DO something to this
- Use varied methods to measure employee skills.
- Do more up front work on identify skills needed for the job (to be shared w/employee upon EOD)? Employee now knows what they need to work toward.

- Measurements are in place; employees are excited about continuous learning.

9. Recruitment Initiatives at targeted Univ.

- Obtaining new skills thru student recruitment
- USDA/1890 Partnerships

Ideas & Measurement

- 1890 Program sponsors college student. Although it is an excellent program, it does not always produce the results we would like. I believe we should also recruit recent graduates through other avenues....

10. Mentoring program

- Piloted Mentoring Program
- The outcome of this effort will be unknown until October 2003. This is a yearlong process.
- Mentoring programs

Ideas & Measurement

- Rather than trying to have formal mentoring programs, require each agency to have and develop and implement agency specific strategies for mentoring women, minorities and people with disabilities
- Mentoring offers one of the most measurable methods to link employee prospect with the specific career. This can be measured in two respects: 1) student intern matched with a career mentor during summers and/or part-time employment opportunities and/or yearlong internships. Their satisfaction as well as hiring numbers is measurable factors. This would involve qualitative and quantitative surveying. 2) promote employees from within by linking them with a USDA mentor. They would be highly encouraged to attend the USDA Mentoring Program where they would be trained in the process of mentoring as a protégé as well as a mentor. The measurable impact would be again their degree of satisfaction, if they moved ahead with career changes and improved performance levels, and how their mentors identified positive outcomes. This process could be targeted to African Americans or for that matter, any socially or minority deprived person.
- Focus on alternate ways of pairing mentor w/mentee.
- Provide in-depth training for mentors on how to be more effective.

11. Train supervisors & managers in coaching and counseling skills

Ideas & Measurement

- Ability to provide appropriate guidance and leadership to subordinates
- Train supervisors and managers in coaching and counseling at the initial stage of their supervisory experience. Hold them accountable for their actions.
- Look for & incorporate initiative in any areas available.
- Proposed Action: Higher leveled management should make it mandatory for all new supervisors to take supervisory training. Additionally, all supervisors should take an enhancer course at least every two years. This class would include training, which is focused on most recent trends (e.g., cultural diversity).
- All supervisors and managers should have mandatory supervisory training.
- The refresher course should be held every year. The training should include human element training, people skills, etc.

12. EGov program

- EGOV initiatives

Ideas & Measurement

- Help develop technology skills
- These initiatives are for all employees.

13. Career change opportunities

- Ideas & Measurement
- Keep quality employees but breathe new life into them with new duties
- Change is positive; change can turn a mediocre employee to the best employee. Resources, time and planning.
- This requires the effort of the individual.
- A database of self-assessment of knowledge, skills, and abilities would be best method to help make career changes.
- Also requires the support of their present supervisor...some folks just don't know where to start to make changes...make them aware of opportunities
- Career change opportunities should be emphasized; employees should be encouraged to have mentors who should help them in identifying avenues on how to make career changes. It really sad to see many employees having a B.A., Masters degree and working as clerks and secretaries. These employees have spent time and money to acquire needed education, skills, and experience but did not get the opportunity to work in their fields. Sometimes, it is not lack of education and or experience that inhibit to get ahead, but it is really the culture that discriminates and differentiates. That has to be changed.
- Help workforce prepare for, accept & embrace change through training & management's leading by example.

14. Establishment of the Diversity Councils

- Creating Diversity Committees

Ideas & Measurement

- Councils are not effective when those appointed do not participate fully. Appointments should be offered competitively to employees who will be passionate and committed to the goals of the Councils. Membership on Diversity Council should include a report on participation back to the member's supervisor and/or program area. Nonparticipation should result in removal and replacement with someone who wants to make a difference, not just to add something to their resume.
- Collateral duty
- This effort is all good and well. However, we need higher management's support in order for this to be a success.
- Being a member of this council is a full time job. Until it is has more full time positions the effort will be tough.

15. Team building sessions

- Stronger units, better products
- Team Brainstorming

Ideas & Measurement

- We have too many team building sessions as it is. This is a good effort as well. However, it would be more successful if everything discussed were followed up, as opposed to letting it fall through the system.
- "Team Building" is an overworked phrase and item when it could be a 'manager problem'.
- Train leaders responsible for managing this how to do and hold them accountable.

16. Strategic Plan to change culture

Ideas & Measurement

- First the Secretary needs to speak to USDA as a whole and show support of all cultures and not just when it is Black History month. Make an effort to show she care for the people that work for her. It can be measure by the amount of times she speaks on this subject.
- Include information to all employees on supporting the "Mission" of USDA and their Division/Branch. Request info from each employee on how they view their work supports the "Mission". What are their individual Goals to help meet the Mission?
- USDA desperately needs a strategic plan with some teeth! The strategic plan should provide adequate funding for a Mentoring Program with specific targets to minority employees. Next, the plan should focus on extensive internship programs striking a public that is in its second or third year of study in a collegiate or technical school environment. This recruitment effort to identify, develop, and eventually hire minority students to become career professionals at USDA should be across all agencies and driven by a central effort. It could be a succession planning initiative at an earlier stage in a talent pool. Usually, we think of succession planning as restricted to experienced managers. The generational shifts in how younger prospective employees value work need to be addressed differently in our recruitment efforts through a better written and implemented strategic plan, or we will sacrifice money and damage our image.

17. Training is an investment

Ideas & Measurement

- There needs to be a cultural change where training is not seen as a reward. Training of employees should be valued
- Managers do not value training.
- I recommend that managers should take the responsibility to measure and track each employee's training and report annually to the mission areas to show that USDA do value the people who work so hard.

Inhibitors to AA Participation

1. Funding

- Funding is not allocated.
- Funding should be allocated every fiscal year to adequately provide training for those in need.
- Funding for individual courses are scarce. Most courses provided identify skills, which all or most employees need. Additional funding would address individual technical skills.

2. Cultural prejudices and ignorance

3. Lack of higher management's support

- As I commented before, this is really true when it comes to minorities. No Money, the course doesn't directly relate to your current job, you've Already over trained, we need you here at work; you don't need training Right now, and so on. These types of discouraging and unmotivating comments that employees hear from their line supervisor whenever they try to enroll in any training and or college they think enhance their performance as well as their future progress.
- Training and development of employees should be a critical performance element for every manager and supervisor. Hold them accountable.
- Lack of management commitment
- Most managers are chosen because of whom they know not by their skills

4. Lack of self-esteem as member of repressed group

- Action: Mentoring program that reaches out to youngsters in junior high and high school, perhaps even elementary school, to help build self-esteem and knowledge that the children can succeed. USDA should support this as an employee effort, making it part of the normal workday. Bring classes into the USDA workplace to meet persons who can serve as role models

5. Good ole boy network

- Administration must dismantle this workplace mentality. Those who exhibit this behavior should be warned then replaced. Action and commitment must come from the top or it will never change. Can't change how employees think, but can dictate how employees act in the workplace.

6. Strategic plan is viewed as a paperwork exercise

7. Lack of awareness of available opportunities for advancement

8. Preconceived idea of your quality of skills

- Managers assume you have a lack of a skill without proof that you lack it. They are not honest with you about or have you prove that you do not lack that skill.
- Skills bank

9. Favoritism

- Managers should treat all employees fairly. All employees should have an opportunity to advance. IDP's should be created at the time performance standards are developed. IDP's should be created based on the need of the employee to effectively and efficiently perform the duties of the position. USDA as an Agency can mandate IDP's for new employee's, as well as for employees that enter new/different positions.

10. Many may not know the political savvy.

- Political savvy may be looked as "sucking up" to management rather than "supporting" management.

11. Lack of awareness of the organization and the work being done.

12. Taking on Risk Taking Inhibitors

- Giving oneself permission to assume a risk taking behavior, which could put you ahead with your career. The inhibitor is that you avoid taking a risk or will not grant yourself permission.

13. Black employees are seen as less qualified

- Minority employees are seen as less qualified
14. Organizational Book Based on Manager Observed Performance
- This is a decision about the individual based on how the manager feels about an individual. This has nothing to do with actual performance that has been observed.
15. Poorer quality of public education
- Doesn't prepare students for moving into higher education facilities
 - This is really up to the Dept of Education, but USDA can put the pressure on, if it dares...
16. Training is considered less of a priority than work requirements
- Emphasis the importance of training and have supervisors encourage or require training for employees.
17. Training is seen as a reward
- Management is threatened by your technical ability because they are not as knowledgeable and as a result your input is neither valued nor accepted in the organization.
 - Your ability is devalued and you are not rewarded for your performance.
 - All employees who are successful in the execution of their duties should be allowed a minimum amount of time and \$\$ for training. Further training should be available for high performing or high potential employees. Low performing employees should have the opportunity for training to enhance their present skills to improve performance or to change their career paths. Often, low performers are board with their work or depressed. Simply cutting them off from training would be futile and a waste of an employee.
18. Lack of employee knowledge about what is available, how to access, etc.
- Most employees are not aware of OPM personnel policies/procedures
19. No Individual Development Plan
- Employees are not aware that it is mandatory that all employees must have an IDP
 - Individual Development Plans are not a magical key for career development. The IDP is merely a blueprint for the employee's career development. Unless management is truly committed to employee development then the IDP is just a piece of paper to be filed in the Employee Performance File.
20. Employees should be educated on what steps they should take to take char
- Educate employees on how to manage their own career.
 - Each Mission Area needs to develop an extensive New Employee Orientation. This will give employees the information that the are not aware of, this will also put them in charge of their own career.

Prioritize Inhibitors

Prioritize Inhibitors	Mean	Weighted Score
1. Cultural prejudices and ignorance	8.46	109.98
2. Lack of higher management's support	8.08	105.04
3. Black employees are seen as less qualified	7.83	93.96
4. Funding (for Training)	7.42	89.04
5. Good ole boy network	7.33	87.96

6. Favoritism	7.08	84.96
7. Preconceived idea of your quality of skills	6.25	75.00
8. Lack of awareness of available opportunities for advancement	6.08	72.96
9. Organizational Book Based on Manager Observed Performance	6.70	67.00
10. Training is considered less of a priority than work requirements	6.00	66.00
11. Lack of awareness of the organization and the work being done.	5.33	63.96
12. Strategic plan is viewed as a paperwork exercise	5.27	57.97
13. Training is seen as a reward	5.09	55.99
14. Lack of self esteem as member of repressed group	5.50	55.00
15. Many may not know the political savvy.	5.20	52.00
16. Taking on Risk Taking Inhibitors	4.73	52.03
17. Poorer quality of public education	6.13	49.04
18. Employees should be educated on what steps they should take to take char	5.88	47.04
19. No Individual Development Plan	4.67	42.03
20. Lack of employee knowledge about what is available, how to access, etc.	4.13	33.04

Immediate Next Steps & Feedback

1. Immediate Next Steps

- Good productive session. Look forward to the results
- Have a meeting with the Secretary and or important officials who can make a decision.
- Action.....
- Share information with those individuals who have the authority to implement recommendations.
- Develop marketing plan for unity and supporting the "Mission".
- I would have a feedback session on the results of your first phase of study. Publish your discoveries. Finally, share written results with the power structure of this organization.
- Share input from this session with participants of this session. Determine who (organizationally) can best address the concerns. Forward appropriately & wait for action.
- Analyze the results. Get a group together to brainstorm how to approach management. Draft a 1, 2, 5, 10-year plan for implementation. Brief management on the results. Get commitment for a budget to implement.
- Become the change agent that USDA desperately need!!!!

2. Feedback to AAAC on Session

- Good Session.
- Interesting format...would have liked to had some more conversation, but this is a great way to collect information from those who deal with these issues, especially given the time restraints
- Productive, learned the use of new technology
- Overall session was good. Suggest more discussion to develop ideas.
- Please keep us advised on forward movement that results from these sessions.
- It was a rewarding experience, productive, and encouraging.

- This is the beginning of an idea that could cause real change in USDA Need more time to interact. Comments from the others were very valuable
- Great opportunity that the information could be applied to most of USDA.
- Good way gets input from across the Department as well as a good networking tool.
- Continue in your efforts, you are headed in the right direction.

3. Feedback to Hudson Group on Session

- Good facilitation. I look forward to seeing the results.
- Wonderful facilitation
- Very professional
- Using technology in this format is new to me and quite nice once I learned to use the PC.
- The Hudson Group on Session was excellent, helpful, and I recommend keeping them.
- Enjoyed your leadership in this effort. The technology was wonderful and very effective. Excellent session!!!
- Technology and immediate feedback of results were great. Wish we had more interaction between participants, though. Facilitator's style is wonderful: easily understood and calm...have difficulty with hyper "cheerleader" types, thank you for your professional and coherent delivery!
- Thanks for an outstanding Session.
- Good facilitation believes was able to draw beneficial information from us.
- This was fun!